

of their nostrils, as well as an indispensable
 anaesthetic for
 the too restless intellect. Hence our cult of
 'strong, silent
 men'; hence the clamours of Carlyle for
 Work, and Production, and shutting up the talking-shop at
 Westminster;
 hence the feverish heartiness of Meredith,
 and his spurning
 of *the questions that sow not nor spin*;
 hence Matthew
 Arnold's insistence that respectability is
 essential, and
 'conduct', not good states of mind, 'three
 fourths of life';
 hence, too, lines like Wilfrid Scawen BluntY.

I would not, if I could, be called a poet.
 I have no natural love of the chaste Muse'.
 If aught be worth the doing, I would do it:
 And others, if they will, may tell the news.

It is useless, and graceless, to ask
 consistency of poets;
 otherwise we might inquire why, if he felt
 like that, Blunt
 wrote, or at all events published, poetry at
 all. But though
 one may laugh at, or be irritated by, this
 carefully cultivated
 unintelligence of the English, it is
 more than a mere
 subject for satire* It has done great things:
 it can some-
 times seem itself a fine one. 'Dans l'effroyable
 mchancet6
 de l'espce', writes one who knows us, M.
 Maurois, half
 smiling and half serious, *les Anglais
 etablissent tine oasis
 de courtoisie et d'indifference. Les hommes
 se detestent;
 les Anglais s'ignorent. Te les aime beaucoup.'

We do not,
 1 1 i
 in short, much appreciate Proust; but we
 are very, very
 nice if you are in trouble; provided you are
 not so far
 round the corner as to be beyond the rather
 narrow radius

of our imaginations. Thus, if you are a
German soldier,
we shall talk beforehand of putting you,
when we catch
you, in a dug-out, and throwing bombs on
top; actually,
when it comes to the point, we shall light
you, not a
bomb, but a cigarette; whereas the
charming French on
our right may prove, as captors, less
charming. One
cannot have everything.